

Afford Child Care Act. This bill will update and reform the outdated child independent tax credit to help more working families. It would increase the tax credit to keep up with the rising costs of quality childcare and would make sure that the credit actually keeps up with the times by indexing it to inflation.

I am very proud to introduce these two bills today, but I am even more proud that my bills are just two of the bills Democrats are introducing today that will help working families by putting more money in their pockets and helping them access more opportunity. My colleagues are going to be talking about the bills they wrote, but our package of bills also includes, besides what I just talked about, an earned-income and childcare tax credit expansion and expansion of the American opportunity tax credit to help middle-class families afford childcare so they can get back on the job and help them pay for college so they can work hard and invest in themselves and their careers.

We know Republicans like to talk about cutting taxes. Well, with these bills we are giving everyone a chance to do exactly that—and not with more tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans and biggest corporations. Republicans have given that trickle-down theory a try, and it failed. Our approach is tax cuts for the middle class, for the workers who need it the most, to help them afford the costs they are faced with, such as childcare, putting food on the table, getting back on the job, and to give them the opportunity to work hard and succeed.

We want to grow the economy from the middle out, not the top down, and we think these middle-class tax cut bills are a very strong step in the right direction. We hope Republicans will join us to get these done.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. COONS, Mr. HOEVEN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. WARNER, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. BROWN, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. CORNYN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, and Mr. MCCONNELL):

S. 665. A bill to encourage, enhance, and integrate Blue Alert plans throughout the United States in order to disseminate information when a law enforcement officer is seriously injured or killed in the line of duty, is missing in connection with the officer's official duties, or an imminent and credible threat that an individual intends to cause the serious injury or death of a law enforcement officer is received, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act of 2015.

Every day, more than 900,000 Federal, State and local law enforcement offi-

cers put their lives on the line to keep our communities safe. Unfortunately these officers can become targets for criminals and those seeking to evade our justice system, and we must make sure our officers have all the tools they need to protect themselves and each other.

Each year thousands of law enforcement officers are assaulted while performing their duties and many suffer serious injuries or even lose their lives. In December 2014, New York City Police Department officers Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu were assassinated while sitting in their marked police patrol car in Brooklyn. This legislation is named after those officers in honor of the ultimate sacrifice that they made to serve and protect their fellow citizens.

According to preliminary data compiled by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, law enforcement fatalities in the U.S. rose 24 percent in 2014, reversing what had been two years of dramatic declines in line of duty deaths. The report indicates that 126 federal, state, local, tribal and territorial officers were killed in the line of duty this year, compared to 102 in 2013. Ambush-style attacks such as those that took the lives of officers Ramos and Liu were the number one cause of felonious officer deaths for the fifth year in a row. Fifteen officers nationwide were killed in ambush assaults in 2014, matching 2012 for the highest total since 1995.

I thank my original cosponsors who have joined me in introducing this legislation, including my lead co-sponsor Senator GRAHAM.

The rapid dissemination of critical, time-sensitive information about suspected criminals is essential to keeping our communities safe. This legislation would encourage, enhance, and integrate Blue Alert programs through the United States. The Attorney General would establish a national Blue Alert communications network within the Department of Justice. The Blue Alert system could be used when a law enforcement officer is: seriously injured or killed in the line of duty; missing in connection with the officer's official duties; or an imminent or credible threat that an individual intends to cause the serious injury or death of a law enforcement officer is received.

The Blue Alert system could be used when the suspect has not been apprehended, and where there is sufficient descriptive information of the suspect and any vehicles involved, if applicable. This information can be used by local law enforcement, the public and the media to help facilitate capture of such offenders and ultimately reduce the risk they pose to our communities and law enforcement officers.

Currently there is no national alert system that provides immediate information to other law enforcement agencies, the media or the public at large. Many states have created a state Blue Alert system in an effort to better in-

form their local communities. The State of Maryland, under the leadership of former Governor Martin O'Malley, created their Blue Alert system in 2008 after the murder of Maryland State Trooper Wesley Brown. Blue Alert programs have been created in 20 states to date, with a growing number of states considering establishing Blue Alert programs.

The purpose of our National Blue Alert legislation is to keep our law enforcement officers and our communities safe. And based on the success of the AMBER Alert and the SILVER Alert, I believe this BLUE Alert will be equally successful in helping to apprehend criminal suspects who have seriously injured or killed our law enforcement officers.

I am also pleased to say this legislation has the endorsement of the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Association of Police Organizations, the Sergeants Benevolent Association of the New York City Police Department, and many other law enforcement associations. Passing this legislation can help us live up to our commitment to help better protect those who serve us. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 96—CONDEMNING THE MURDER OF BORIS NEMTSOV, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. MCCAIN (for himself and Mr. GRAHAM) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 96

Whereas, on February 27, 2015, Russian opposition leader and former deputy prime minister Boris Nemtsov was brutally murdered in the shadow of the Kremlin in Russia's capitol city Moscow;

Whereas Mr. Nemtsov was a man of conviction and principle who dedicated his life to the fight against corruption in Russia and sought to advance democracy, human rights, free speech, free market reforms, and the rule of law throughout his life;

Whereas, in December 2011, Mr. Nemtsov helped mobilize the largest anti-Kremlin demonstrations since the early 1990's, leading tens of thousands of Russians to march in protest of widespread fraud and corruption in the parliamentary elections;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation responded by passing a series of harsh laws that vastly expanded the definition of treason, increased government control over the media, and limited the scope and activities of opposition parties and civil society organizations;

Whereas Russian authorities exploit these laws for their own political ends and use them to intimidate members of the opposition, human rights activists, and others with whom they disagree;

Whereas Mr. Nemtsov strongly opposed these and other repressive measures, and expressed concerns that President Vladimir Putin's policies were threatening democracy and rule of law in Russia;

Whereas Mr. Nemtsov strongly criticized Russia's annexation of Crimea and military

activities in eastern Ukraine, blaming President Putin for a “mad, aggressive and deadly policy of war against Ukraine” and lying to the Russian people about this policy;

Whereas Mr. Nemtsov had been investigating Russia’s role in Ukraine and was preparing to release an investigative report conclusively proving the participation of the Russian Armed Forces in the invasion of Ukraine and revealing the extent to which the Government of the Russian Federation was involved;

Whereas, prior to his death, Mr. Nemtsov planned to lead a Spring March on March 1, 2015, to protest the Russian military’s presence in Ukraine;

Whereas, on February 28, 2015, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko stated that he believed Mr. Nemtsov had been murdered because he planned to disclose this evidence of Russia’s involvement in Ukraine;

Whereas President Putin called critics of his government “a fifth column” and “national traitors”, inviting violent attacks upon them and sponsoring a campaign of hatred, intimidation, and aggression;

Whereas, on February 20, 2015, a new movement called Anti-Maidan marched freely through Moscow calling for violence against this “fifth column”, with signs naming Mr. Nemtsov as an enemy of Russia;

Whereas Mr. Nemtsov’s colleagues stated that he was under state surveillance shortly before his murder and he was murdered in one of the most heavily-secured areas of Moscow, suggesting the Government of Russia’s culpability;

Whereas other prominent figures in Russia who have criticized President Putin and his government have also been assassinated, including Vladimir Goloviyov, Yuri Shchekochikhin, Anna Politkovskaya, Alexander Litvinenko, Magomed Yevloyev, Stanislav Markelov, and Natalia Estemirova;

Whereas none of the individuals responsible for these assassinations have been brought to justice, raising serious questions about the ability of Russian authorities to conduct a credible investigation into Mr. Nemtsov’s murder;

Whereas a culture of impunity and lack of accountability prevail in Putin’s Russia, with law enforcement, judicial, and investigative bodies often used to target political opponents and civil society, and thus lacking credibility to conduct an investigation themselves;

Whereas the Russia Investigative Committee released a list of motives for Mr. Nemtsov’s murder which do not take into account his role as a prominent government critic, surveillance cameras were allegedly turned off for maintenance during the time of his murder, and Kremlin-sponsored channels are inciting fear and hatred by propagating conspiracy theories that blame the United States for his assassination;

Whereas these continuing assassinations are intended to intimidate the people of Russia and undermine political and social reform in the Russian Federation; and

Whereas support for rule of law and human rights in the Russian Federation will help ensure its future as a free, strong, and vibrant society and enduring stability in the Russian Federation will come from an active civil society in which democracy flourishes: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the courageous work of Boris Nemtsov, a tireless advocate for reform and human rights who sacrificed his life in the fight for freedom and democracy in the Russian Federation;

(2) expresses its deepest condolences to the family, friends, and colleagues of Mr.

Nemtsov, as well as to all the people of Russia;

(3) condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the murder of Boris Nemtsov on February 27, 2015, as well as the assassinations of numerous other human rights and democracy activists in the Russian Federation since President Vladimir Putin came to office;

(4) urges the President to seek a United Nations Security Council resolution that establishes an independent investigation into the assassination;

(5) calls upon the Government of Russia to support and facilitate an independent inquiry into the murder of Mr. Nemtsov;

(6) urges the Government of the Russian Federation to release all political prisoners and to end the ongoing harassment of political opponents, human rights activists, and journalists;

(7) calls for the restoration of an independent judiciary and the rule of law in the Russian Federation, and an end to all restrictions on the media and freedom of speech;

(8) urges the President to add the names of persons that Mr. Nemtsov requested be added to the visa ban list as provided for under the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act of 2012 (title IV of Public Law 112-208) and continue to sanction human rights violators in the Russian Federation;

(9) urges the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to obtain, examine, and publish the investigative report Mr. Nemtsov planned to release as part of the OSCE observer role in eastern Ukraine to demonstrate the inability of the Government of the Russian Federation to suppress the truth Mr. Nemtsov represented; and

(10) urges the President to significantly increase United States Government support to like-minded partners and human rights activists in the Russian Federation to create a more vibrant civil society and open media environment in which democracy can flourish.

SENATE RESOLUTION 97—SUPPORTING THE GOALS OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. KIRK, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mrs. BOXER, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 97

Whereas there are more than 3,500,000,000 women in the world today;

Whereas women around the world have fundamental human rights, participate in the political, social, and economic life of their communities, play a critical role in providing and caring for their families, contribute substantially to the growth of economies and the prevention of conflict, and, as farmers and caregivers, play an important role in advancing food security for their communities;

Whereas the advancement of women around the world is a foreign policy priority for the United States;

Whereas on September 24, 2014, President Barack Obama highlighted the United States support for the advancement of women, noting: “Where women are full participants in a country’s politics or economy, societies are more likely to succeed. And that’s why we support the participation of women in parliaments and peace processes, schools, and the economy.”;

Whereas women remain underrepresented in conflict prevention and conflict resolution efforts, despite proven success by women in conflict-affected regions in moderating violent extremism, countering terrorism, resolving disputes through nonviolent mediation and negotiation, and stabilizing societies by improving access to peace and security services, institutions, and decision-making venues;

Whereas on December 19, 2011, the Obama Administration launched the first United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (referred to in this preamble as the “National Action Plan”) that includes a comprehensive set of national commitments to advance the active participation of women in decisionmaking relating to matters of war and peace;

Whereas the National Action Plan states the following: “Deadly conflicts can be more effectively avoided, and peace can be best forged and sustained, when women become equal partners in all aspects of peace-building and conflict prevention, when their lives are protected, their experiences considered, and their voices heard.”;

Whereas the National Action Plan requires the National Security Council staff to coordinate a comprehensive review of, and update to, the National Action Plan in 2015 with consultation from international partners and civil society organizations;

Whereas according to the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs of the Department of State, women’s full and meaningful participation in security forces vastly enhances their effectiveness;

Whereas the ability of women and girls to realize their full potential is critical to the ability of a country to achieve strong and lasting economic growth and political and social stability;

Whereas according to the International Monetary Fund, “focusing on the needs and empowerment of women is one of the keys to human development”;

Whereas according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, two-thirds of the 781,000,000 illiterate people in the world are female;

Whereas according to the United States Agency for International Development, compared to uneducated women, “educated women are less likely to marry early and more likely to have smaller and healthier families. They are also more likely to get a job and earn a higher wage.”;

Whereas according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the majority of women living in rural areas of the developing world are heavily engaged in agricultural labor, yet they receive less credit, land, agricultural inputs, and training than their male counterparts;

Whereas according to the United Nations Population Fund, women have access to fewer income-earning opportunities and are more likely to manage the household and engage in agricultural work, making women more vulnerable to economic insecurity caused by natural disasters and long-term changes in weather patterns;

Whereas according to the World Bank, women own or partly own more than one-third of small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries, and 40 percent of the global workforce is female, yet, women entrepreneurs and employers have disproportionately less access to capital and other financial services compared to men;

Whereas despite strides in recent decades, women around the world continue to face significant obstacles in all aspects of their lives, including underrepresentation in all aspects of public life, denial of basic human rights, and discrimination;